
ADE Resource | Strengthening gender diversity at energy events: “the Frencham test”

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At the ADE we believe that diverse representation at our events leads to more innovative, interesting and overall better discussions and as such we aim to be as inclusive as possible. To encourage thoughtful event planning, the Association created an internal test to hold ourselves to a high standard. Over the last year or so, we've been trialling this internally and feel that it's made a significant and positive difference to our event planning. We are now sharing this resource with you to help complement your own internal work on inclusion and diversity. We really hope it's useful!

The “Frencham test” for diversity

The Frencham test is, in effect, an energy sector events version of the Bechdel test (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bechdel_test). We hope you will find this useful in planning and evaluating gender diversity at events you are organising.

To note

Please note this is designed to promote greater gender diversity at events, and doesn't address wider aspects of diversity.

Within the test, a person's gender is whatever they identify it to be!

The test

The Frencham test sees that for all events:

- At least 40% of all conference speakers are female or non-binary (Chairs count as speakers if they are doing more than a formal introduction only aka if they are also driving content)
- At least 40% of Chairs are male (no using female or non-binary Chairs to booster your female and non-binary 'count')
- There are no panels that are all-male or all-female or non-binary, with the exception of sessions specifically focussed on diversity that are seeking to highlight a particular peoples' experience
- Social science-y sessions are not significantly female- or non-binary- speaker-dominated; Finance and industry sessions are not significantly male-speaker-dominated
- Where questions are drawn from the audience, at least 40% of questioners selected are female or non-binary

Hint: a good yardstick for determining whether you've got a good balance is to look through the lens of your comms material about the event: is the diversity of speakers is so genuine that no pro-active manipulation/editing of website/programme order needs to be done to achieve the appearance of diversity?

Scoring

The test has a grading system (rather than pass/fail) [if any of the above are n/a for your event, you may assume a point is given for it]:

5/5 = gold status

4/5 = silver status

3/5 = silver status

2/5 = bronze status

0 or 1 = fail

Success looks like

The test is designed to encourage us to remember the value of showcasing diverse perspectives in our events and to actively work towards this, thinking creatively about how we can achieve gold status. It is ambitious and stretching, rather than necessarily being an "expected to reach" target.

For further information please contact:

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